

to express religion [religious] * freedom. And it's our way of expressing our personal faith and, at the same time, urging societies to feel comfortable with and confident in saying to their people, if you feel like praising God, you're allowed to do so in any way you see fit.

God bless, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:14 a.m. at Cua Bac Cathedral.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Hu Jintao of China in Hanoi

November 19, 2006

President Hu. It's a great pleasure to see you again, Mr. President. I remember, in the course of this year, we have already met each other three times; we had four telephone conversations; and we also maintained frequent exchange of letters. So it is fair to say that we are keeping very close touch and this has vigorously promoted China-U.S. relations.

I'm pleased to see new progress in China-U.S. relations since our meeting in St. Petersburg in July this year. Our two countries have maintained a frequent exchange of visits at the top levels and at different levels. And actually, our trade has also been expanding very rapidly, and I do have a piece of good news to share with you. According to U.S. statistics, in first 7 months of this year, U.S. exports to China jumped 35 percent.

Nationally, our mechanism for having strategic economic dialog has also been launched, and the first inaugural dialog will be held in Beijing around the middle of next month. And Chinese naval ships have again paid a visit to the continental America for the first time in 6 years. And even as we speak, our naval ships of the two countries are conducting joint search and rescue maneuvers in Chinese waters.

So, all in all, we feel very happy about the healthy and stable extension of China-U.S. relations. I think we would not have achieved such a state of our bilateral relations had it not been for your outstanding leadership.

* White House correction.

President Bush. Well, thank you.

President Hu. So, with this, I would like to turn it over to you.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. President. You're right; you and I have had a lot of meetings. And the reason why is because we recognize that working together, we can accomplish a lot for the security of the world and for the prosperity of our people. China is a very important nation, and the United States believes strongly that by working together, we can help solve problems such as North Korea and Iran.

Our bilateral relations are very good, and we—you and I are committed to keeping them that way. Obviously, with as much commerce between our countries as there is, there's going to be trade difficulties, but nevertheless, we both adopt a spirit of mutual respect and the desire to work through our problems for the common good of our peoples.

I strongly support your vision, Mr. President, of encouraging your country to become a nation of consumers and not savers, which will inure to the benefit of our manufacturers, both large and small, and our farmers as well.

I always enjoy our frank and friendly discussions, and I'm looking forward to this one as well. And I thank you for your hospitality.

Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:34 a.m. at the Hanoi Daewoo Hotel. President Hu spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Hanoi

November 19, 2006

President Bush. Today Vladimir and I are pleased to report that after a long set of negotiations, Representative Gref and Ambassador Schwab have signed agreements that will be good for the United States and good for Russia—and that is, we support Russia's accession into the WTO. I congratulate you all for your hard work and thank you very much for the hard work.